



WaterStarters in Kenya

Creating sustainable water solutions for rural and peri-urban communities in Kenya



The challenges in Kenya's water sector

In Kenya, 1 out of 3 people drink water from unprotected sources leading to waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea, intestinal worms, and parasitic infections. Diarrhoea is the second leading cause of death of children under 5 years. In rural households, girls and women are 6 times more likely to fetch water than men, walking up to 12 km per day. This negatively effects school attendance and performance, and prohibits women to channel time and resources to other productive activities. The spread of Covid-19 results in growing inequalities, underlining the importance of water and hygiene for all.

MegaGroup and Amref believe that every human being should have access to safe and affordable drinking and household water and that no one should suffer from waterborne diseases. Our ambition is to radically improve this situation for 1.5 million Kenyans in water-stressed areas in the coming 7 years.

Our solution: WaterStarters

MegaGroup and Amref Health Africa joined forces in WaterStarters; A **franchise** that renovates and builds 600 water supply systems, each of them designed together with the community to match their specific needs. WaterStarters offers private operators and communities (franchisees) the opportunity to own and manage a successful water business, providing them with access to funding for the initial investment. The precondition is that franchisees contribute at least 15% of the investment upfront, increasing their ownership and commitment. At the same time, it offers impact investors and donors an attractive, sustainable initiative to invest in.

WaterStarters offers a **comprehensive solution** to guarantee water availability all year round with a borehole downtime of maximum 3 days, opposed to the current average of 27 days. This solution includes groundwater scans, solar energy, pre-paid water meters, and a monitoring dashboard. This is combined with hygiene education for, and provided by, community members. The education helps to prevent waterborne illnesses and increases demand for safe water.

WaterStarters is financed through a **blended model**, consisting of franchisee contributions, grants and loans. We pool our funding and create a portfolio of smaller and larger sized water systems. In this way, we spread risk and rewards across those systems. WaterStarters thereby also benefits from economies of scale and lower running costs, allowing us to reach those at the bottom of the wealth pyramid.

Impact beyond water provision

- People's health by reducing waterborne diseases;
- Education, because reduced illness and reduced water fetching times enables children to attend school;
- Gender equality, because women and girls are relieved from fetching water;
- Climate action by installing solar panels for sustainable energy;
- Economic growth by guaranteeing a stable water source for agriculture and livestock.
- Partnerships for the goals by collaborating with key partners and suppliers to deliver this solution.



We are currently piloting WaterStarters in three communities in Kenya reaching about 15,000 people, prior to scaling our approach throughout Kenya. **Interested to learn more?** Visit www.waterstarters.org or www.amref.nl/ventures. Or reach out to Romy Harkx (Romy.Harkx@Amref.nl).